

TWO

1508/1321

DISCOURSES,

DELIVERED AT THE

OPENING AND CONSECRATION

OF THE

NEW JERUSALEM TEMPLE,

IN

BIRMINGHAM,

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 1791-35.

AND NOW

Published at the unanimous Request of the Society.

BY J. PROUD.

R Imperfect

And I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth; for the first Heaven and the first Earth were passed away: And He that sat upon the Throne, said, Behold, I make all Things new.

REV. XXI. 1—5.

BIRMINGHAM,

PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. BELCHER;

SOLD ALSO BY R. HINDMARSH, NO. 32, CLERKENWELL-CLOSE, LONDON.

1791.

[Price One Shilling.]



TO THE
R E A D E R.

*AS the following Discourses were delivered upon a particular occasion, and also met with the approbation of a genteel and numerous audience, the Author flatters himself that some real benefit may arise from the publication of them, not only to those who heard them delivered, but to many in Birmingham who had not that opportunity *, as well as to others in different parts of the kingdom.*

They are, therefore, humbly submitted to the candid perusal of impartial minds. If they are found to contain doctrines and sentiments different from those of the present day, yet the serious inquirer, who is in search after truth, through the love of it, will, it is hoped, find therein no doctrines or sentiments but what are founded upon the holy and unerring word of the LORD. The Author's most sincere wish is, that all error and false doctrine may be totally relinquished, and that the unadulterated, genuine truth of the Bible,

* It is well known that MANY HUNDREDS came to hear, which could not get into the Temple. In the course of the day (it is believed) SOME THOUSANDS were disappointed of hearing, for want of room.

TO THE READER.

may prevail amongst professing christians of all denominations; and if the following Discourses should have the least tendency to dissipate human traditions, false doctrines, and establish the pure truth of the word, the Author will think himself amply rewarded—at the same time acknowledging that it is not of himself, but of the LORD, that good is done, be that good of whatsoever kind it may. The LORD himself is the alone fountain of all that is good, and of all that is true; therefore to Him alone be ascribed all the praise.

The Author can but acknowledge, with the sincerest gratitude, the good opinion his Audience conceived of the Discourses; and he thinks it a peculiar honor done him, that their request for the publication was so unanimous.

To them, therefore, and to the members of the New Jerusalem Church at large, are they more peculiarly dedicated,

By their grateful Friend and Brother in the Truth,



J. P.

BIRMINGHAM,
July 4, 1791-35.

SERMON I.

THEREFORE NOW LET IT PLEASE THEE TO BLESS
THE HOUSE OF THY SERVANT, THAT IT MAY
CONTINUE FOR EVER BEFORE THEE: FOR THOU,
O LORD GOD, HAST SPOKEN IT, AND WITH THY
BLESSING LET THE HOUSE OF THY SERVANT BE
BLESSED FOR EVER.

II SAMUEL, VII. 29.

THESE words are the concluding part
of a prayer which David, the King of Israel,
offered up to his God, after he had given
him to know his pleasure concerning the
house, which David had intended to build
for the worship and service of the God of
Israel. And as they respect a circumstance
of this kind, I think them no way improper
on the present occasion; as we are this day
consecrating to the LORD our GOD this
House, which is now set apart for the
service and worship of the LORD JESUS
CHRIST, the ONLY God of angels and
men.

men. Permit me, therefore, to request your serious attention to the following heads of discourse:—

In the first place, I shall lay before you a few reasons why this edifice is erected, and now devoted to religious worship.

Secondly, Take the liberty of noticing some of the leading doctrines and truths, which, by divine permission, will be delivered in this Temple, and maintained by this Society.

Thirdly, As I am confident every person who cordially espouses the doctrines of truth, will most ardently desire that the divine blessing may attend this House, and more especially the Church that shall be here formed; I shall remind you of a few things, which, if diligently and faithfully regarded, will be best calculated to ensure the divine blessing, which is requested in our text.

In the fourth place, I shall conclude with a short, but serious and affectionate address, to my audience.

I am

I am, in the first place, to lay before you a few reasons why this edifice is erected, and now devoted to religious worship.

No doubt it may be supposed by many now present, that this kingdom is sufficiently stocked with buildings of a religious kind; and instead of an addition being made to the number, it would be much better if many of those, already devoted to religious purposes, were converted to a different use; and the congregations which occupy them, so far united in sentiment, as to make much fewer serve their purpose. I candidly confess, the great number of religious edifices, and especially of different sects, parties, and denominations, give us but a very unfavourable idea of christian professors. I am apprehensive history can hardly point us to an æra, in which there have been a greater, or so great a diversity of religious characters, distinctions, and parties; and I am so far from thinking it a *blessing* , that it rather appears to me a strong proof of the sad declension and darkness of the christian world: and, if I am not much mistaken, this very circumstance, of which I am now speaking, is one reason

why this building is raised and devoted to the worship of God. For had not a real departure from true christianity taken place, and an almost total darkness spread over the minds of christians in general, the second appearance of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST might not, as yet, have been known. And it is, *principally*, upon this foundation, that this Temple (for such we choose to call it) is set apart for religious worship—viz. a full and clear conviction of mind that the christian church is come to its consummation, and that the LORD is making his second advent—forming new heavens and a new earth—and setting up a kingdom which shall stand for ever. This is professedly the reason why this house is this day dedicated to the LORD.

But it is not my design, in this discourse, to adduce those proofs and evidences upon which this conviction is founded, that (through divine mercy) will be done at another time. But I will offer another reason, which indeed is intimately connected with the above; and that is, we are persuaded that such is the state of the christian church, taking in every denomination thereof, that,





glorified his humanity, and made it divine, uniting it with his own Deity; and that, therefore, he is properly and truly GOD and MAN, in one Divine Person. We cannot admit the idea of three Gods on any consideration, as being repugnant to scripture and reason, viz. we cannot admit that the Father is GOD and LORD in one person, the Son GOD and LORD in another person, and the Holy Ghost GOD and LORD in a third person. For if there are three distinct persons in the Deity, and each be truly and properly GOD, then there must be three Jehovahs, three Creators, three Divine Essences, three First Causes, &c. For to assert there are three distinct persons in the Godhead, each of which is truly GOD and LORD, and that still there is but *one God*, is a manifest contradiction. As no *person* can exist without a *form*, no *form* without an *essence*, consequently, if there be three distinct persons in the Godhead, there must be three Divine Essences, three equal, co-eternal, almighty, and omnipotent Gods—which is utterly contrary to reason and scripture, and so impossible in itself, that we cannot, on any consideration, admit such an idea.

Equally distant are we from the faith of the Socinian, Arian, or Pelagian, who deny the Divinity of JESUS CHRIST, and assert him to be no more than a man, or an angel. Infomuch, that we confess the LORD JESUS to be the only living and true God, in his Divine Humanity.

The limit of this discourse will not admit of my controverting these subjects now ; but, as a proof that our faith in the LORD JESUS, as the only God of heaven and earth, is according *to*, and founded *on* the holy word, I shall adduce the few following passages, out of a great number more which might be referred to :—Isa. xlv. 21, 22. “ Am “ not I Jehovah ? And there is no God else “ beside me, a just God *and a Saviour*, there “ is *none* beside me.”—xliii. 11. “ I am Je- “ hovah, and beside me there is no Saviour.” —Hosea xiii. 4. “ I am Jehovah thy God, “ thou shalt know no God but me ; for “ there is no Saviour beside me.”—Isa. xlix. 26. “ And all flesh shall know that I, Jeho- “ vah, am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer.”—xlvii. 4. “ As for our Redeemer, the Lord “ of Hosts is his name.”—xlv. 6. “ Thus “ faith Jehovah the King of Israel, and his “ Redeemer,

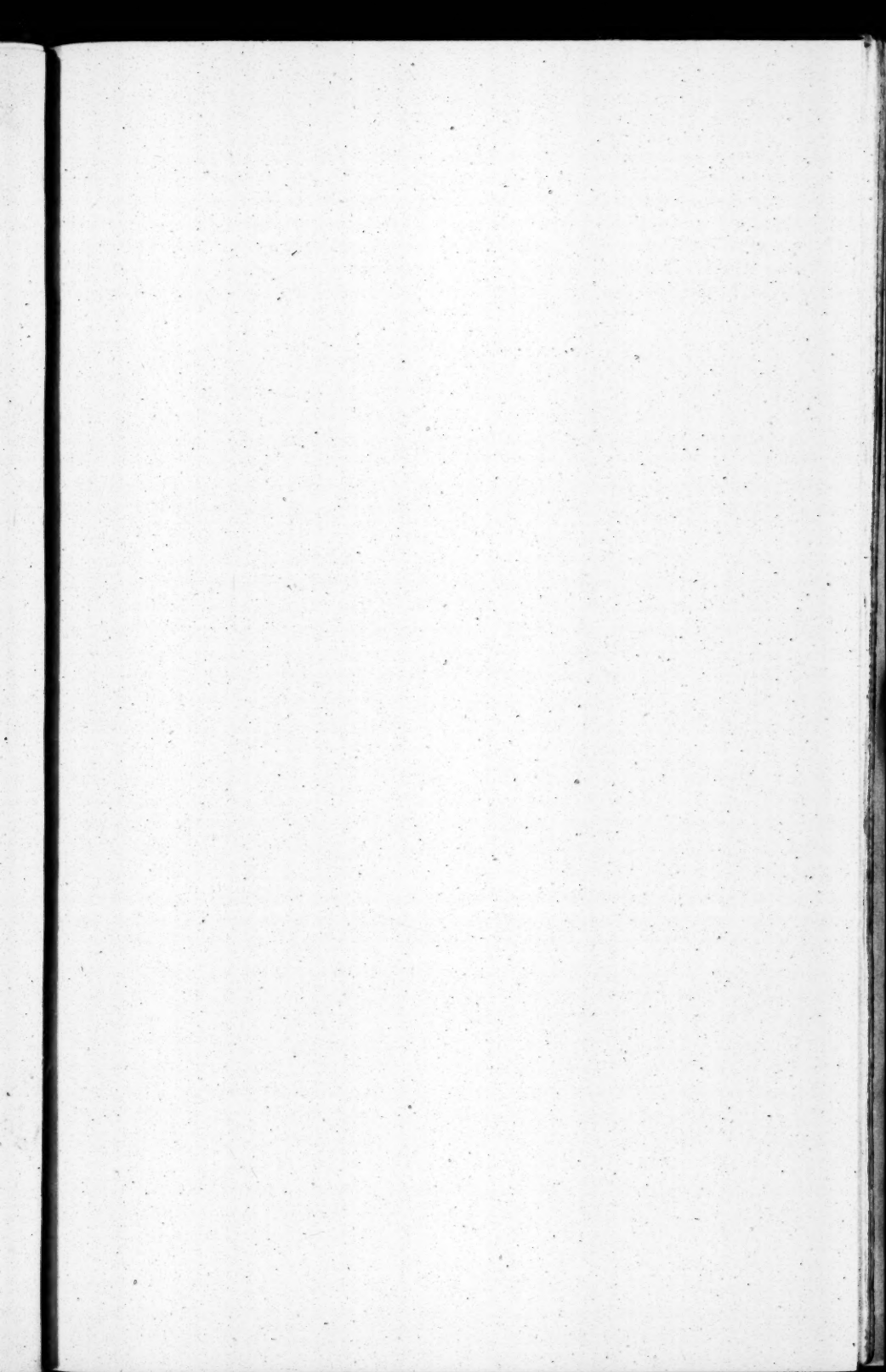
“ Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts, I am the
 “ first and the last, and beside me there is no
 “ God.”—Rev. i. 8. 11. “ I am Alpha and
 “ Omega, the beginning and the ending,
 “ faith the Lord ; which *is*, and which *was*,
 “ and which *is to come* ; the *Almighty*. Fear
 “ not ; I am the first and the last.”—Rev.
 xxii. 12, 13. “ Behold, I come quickly ; I
 “ am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and
 “ end, the first and the last.”—John xiv. 8, 9.
 “ Philip faith unto Jesus, Shew us the Fa-
 “ ther : Jesus said unto him, He that seeth
 “ me seeth the Father.”—Col. ii. 9. “ In
 “ Jesus Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the
 “ Godhead bodily.”—Rev. xv. 3, 4. “ Great
 “ and marvellous are thy works, Lord God
 “ Almighty ; just and true are thy ways,
 “ thou King of Saints ! who shall not fear
 “ thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name ? for
 “ thou only art holy.” &c. &c.

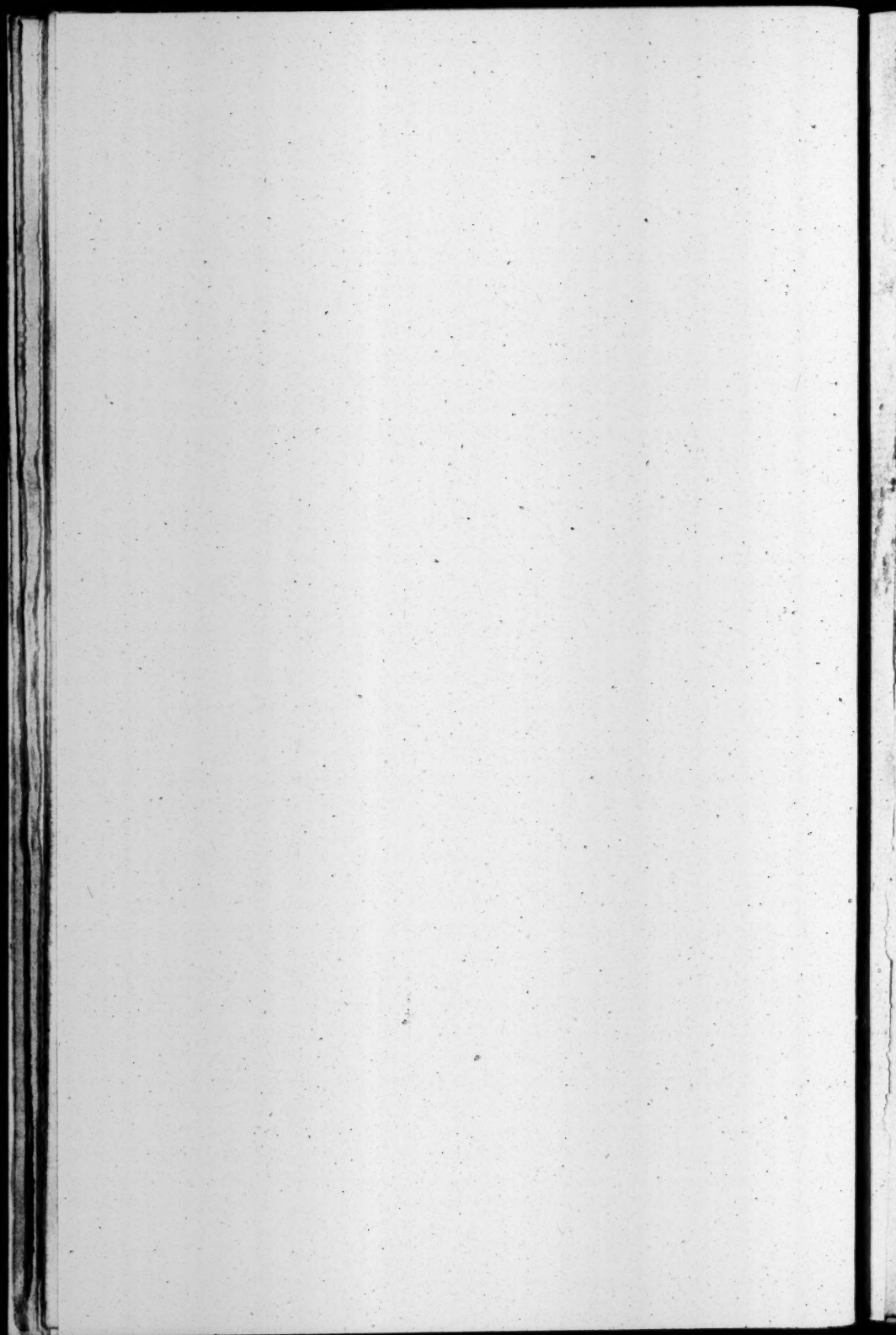
These passages must, I presume, appear
 to every person, who is under any degree of
 illumination from the LORD, as indubitable
 proofs that there is but *one God* in one divine
 person, and that the LORD JESUS CHRIST is
 that one Jehovah. And here I can but ear-
 nestly recommend this subject to your seri-
 ous

ous confideration. It is, affuredly, of great importance for us to know, truly and fcripturally, that Being whom we profefs to worship, and whose people and fervants we are. It may, indeed, be faid, that the fubject is myfterious—the learned have feldom been agreed upon it—the volumes which have been written, have rather darkened and bewildered the underftanding, than elucidated the truth—and that controversies and difputations have greatly depreciated the glorious fubject, manifested the weaknefs of the human mind, and more perplexed and confused the ferious inquirer.

I allow this has too often been the cafe, and I am far from recommending a method of this kind. It is very rare that we gain much true light by controversy—it is much more common for us to confirm our minds in error by difputations, as they are generally carried on in a wrong fpirit; our own opinions we are determined to fupport, and our fole defire being to come off with victory.—But if you would know truth from error; if you are in fearch after truth, through the love of truth. I would humbly advife you in the prefent cafe, to read the holy word







“ was a subject most familiar to the men
 “ of the most ancient times, who esteemed
 “ it the science of sciences, and cultivated
 “ it so universally that all their books and
 “ tracts were written by Correspondences.
 “ The book of Job, which is a book of the
 “ ancient church, is full of Correspondences.
 “ The hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, and
 “ the fabulous stories of antiquity, were
 “ founded on the same science ; all the an-
 “ cient churches were churches representa-
 “ tive of spiritual things : their ceremonies,
 “ and even their statutes, which were rules
 “ for the institution of their worship, con-
 “ sisted of mere Correspondences : in like
 “ manner, every thing in the Israelitish
 “ church, their burnt-offerings, sacrifices,
 “ meat-offerings, and drink-offerings, with
 “ all the particulars belonging to each, were
 “ Correspondences : so also was the taber-
 “ nacle, with all things contained in it, and
 “ likewise their festivals, as the feast of the
 “ unleavened bread, the feast of tabernacles,
 “ &c. also the priesthood of Aaron and the
 “ Levites, and the garments of their holi-
 “ ness : and besides the things above-men-
 “ tioned, all their statutes and judgments,
 “ relating to worship and life, were Corre-
 “ spondences.

“ spondences. Now, forasmuch as divine
 “ things fix their existence in outward na-
 “ ture in Correspondences, therefore the
 “ word was written by mere Correspond-
 “ ences; and for the same reason, the Lord,
 “ in consequence of speaking from the divi-
 “ nity, spake by Correspondences; for what-
 “ ever proceeds from the divinity, when it
 “ comes into outward nature, manifests itself
 “ in such outward things as correspond with
 “ what is divine: which outward things
 “ become repositories of divine things, other-
 “ wise called celestial and spiritual, and lie
 “ contained within them in a hidden and
 “ mysterious manner.”

But I pass on to inform you, that we most
 confidently believe the prophecies of the
 holy word, which relate to the latter days
 and the LORD's second appearance, are now
fully accomplished—that the New Jerusalem is
 descending from GOD out of heaven—that
 the new heavens and new earth, or a new
 kingdom and a new church, are forming;
 according to what is written in Daniel, the
 prophets, the apocalipse, and spoken by
 JESUS CHRIST himself—a kingdom that shall
 stand for ever.—Also, that the period is near,
 in

in which there shall be ONE JEHOVAH, and his name ONE, all over the earth; consequently, we believe that the christian church is come to its consummation and end.—But these are subjects, each of which would require a sermon to do them justice, or so to open them, that my hearers might comprehend our views. I beg leave therefore to pass over these for the present, with many other articles of equal moment, which I have not time now to explain, or even mention: but I will not omit to inform you, that we do most cordially and confidently maintain that the LORD our GOD is a GOD of goodness and truth, love and wisdom, that wrath, anger, and fury are not in him; but that his love, goodness, and mercy flow continually to all his creatures; that he is tender and kind to the whole race of fallen sinners, and is their Redeemer and Saviour, in and by whom they might all have been happy for ever, had they believed on him, and obeyed his will. The whole of redemption and salvation we believe to be of mere grace, divine mercy and love; and that true religion consists in putting away our evils—repenting of them—believing in the LORD JESUS CHRIST—loving him
with

with all the heart—our neighbour as ourselves—and keeping the commandments of our God.

We conceive that the essence of true religion is love to God, and charity to man—and that whoever is not under the influence of such a love, is not in truth a christian. If we had a faith by which we could remove mountains, and a wisdom equal to the angels of heaven, yet without love to God and man we are nothing.

We are men, in consequence of having from God a *will and an understanding*, and our will is designed to receive the influx of divine love—our understanding the influx of divine wisdom. As, therefore, we give up our will and understanding to the divine influx from the LORD, by relinquishing and putting away our evils and falses, we become principled in heavenly love and charity, and in true wisdom, or the knowledge of divine truth. By this divine love we are led to a life of holiness, usefulness, or true religion; and when under this influence we die to self-love, love of the world, and love of dominion, and live in love to God,
charity

charity towards our neighbour, and conscientiously keep the commandments of the LORD; then we are true christians, and persevering in this life of goodness and truth, we may confidently rely upon the divine promises, and cheerfully expect a joyful and happy immortality.

Religion has, for ages past, been represented as nothing more than a decent, but imperfect morality, on the one hand—or as something severe, melancholly, and forbidding, on the other. Many of its doctrines have been supposed as infinitely above the limit of human understanding; and the preceptive part as requiring a sullen deportment, a severe discipline, a melancholly aspect, and an unsocial life. Whereas the truth is, that true religion is spiritual and divine in its origin—its doctrines rational, plain, and easy to be comprehended—its precepts and injunctions mild, easy, and truly pleasant—and the life of a christian cheerful, social, pleasureable, and happy—insomuch, that it is infinitely preferable to every other life, in its pleasures, enjoyments, and satisfactions, as well as in its usefulness, advantages, and end. In fact, true christianity, or religion,

is nothing more nor less than love to God, and charity to man, manifested in outward life, in all our conduct, conversation, and intercourse with each other: or, in other words, a true faith is to believe what the holy word teaches; and a true charity is to do what that word commands us. And it is with unspeakable pleasure that we believe the happy days are commencing, in which solifidianism shall hide its hated head—faith and charity form a divine union in the internal of man—and be the distinguishing characteristic of the real christian—that his life shall be a life of usefulness, from a spiritual principle—and true religion again appear, in all its heavenly charms.

But allow me further to assure you, we do most confidently believe that although man is a fallen, depraved, and contaminated sinner, yet he is a *Free Agent*. What we mean is, that every rational man hath given from the LORD, a power of willing that which is good, or that which is evil; of thinking that which is true, or of that which is false; and of choosing one in preference to the other. “That man actually
“ possesses

“ possesses this freedom, he may know from
 “ the operations of his own mind, and what
 “ passes inwardly in his spirit; he being
 “ able to think and choose either good or
 “ evil. Now this inward experience evinces,
 “ beyond a thousand arguments, that liber-
 “ ty belongs to man, as his spirit is his
 “ proper self, and it is that which freely
 “ thinks, wills, and chooses. That man would
 “ not be capable of being reformed or re-
 “ generated without freedom of will, is ma-
 “ nifest, because he is, by the original con-
 “ stitution of his nature, born to evils of
 “ every kind, which must be removed in
 “ order to his salvation: and that can only
 “ be by his *knowing*, owning, renouncing,
 “ and abhorring them. Indeed, without free-
 “ will in spiritual things, the word of God
 “ would be of no manner of use; as man
 “ would be in no capacity of obeying it in
 “ any of its injunctions. What is more fre-
 “ quently insisted upon therein, than that
 “ man should do good, and not evil? that he
 “ should love God, believe on him, and not
 “ love the world, self, and sin, and live in un-
 “ belief? Moreover, the word of God abounds
 “ with injunctions and exhortations to obe-
 “ dience, and with blessings and promises of

“reward for those who practice its precepts,
 “and with curses and threatnings against
 “those who do not practice them. But to
 “what purpose would all those things con-
 “tained in the word serve, unless man had
 “free-will in spiritual things; that is, in
 “such things as regard salvation and eternal
 “life? See the following texts of scripture:
 “Luke iii. 8, 9. vi. 46 to 49. viii. 21.—John
 “xiii. 7.—Isa. i. 16, 17.—Zech. i. 6.—Rev.
 “xxii. 12.”

But I will conclude this head by observing,
 that we acknowledge the holy sacraments of
 baptism and the LORD's supper, to be two
 standing ordinances in the church, and
 which the LORD himself hath appointed and
 commanded to be observed, by all those who
 worship him as their only God, love him,
 and keep his laws; and therefore those sa-
 craments will be duly administered in this
 society, which society we profess to be a
 part and branch of the New Jerusalem
 Church, which the LORD JEHOVAH is now
 erecting on the earth. At the same time
 declaring, we can only become members of
 the LORD's New Church, by relinquishing
 our evils and falses of every kind—receiving
 the

the LORD in his second advent—worshipping him in his divine humanity as our only God—and from pure love and charity doing his will. Nor do we, on any account, consider ourselves better than others; or that we are more worthy to enter into the new kingdom of our God, than others are: but that, through divine mercy, the LORD hath enabled us to receive the truth, as it is now manifested, *a little before others of our pious brethren*, and in some good measure to see the fallen state we were in as christian professors, that the christian church is come to its consummation, and that the time is now arrived for the LORD our God to make his second appearance, form the new heavens and earth, set up a kingdom amongst men which shall never be destroyed, but be the crown of all other churches, and stand for ever.

And we most sincerely and ardently desire that our brethren in the christian profession, who are sincere and upright in their present state; may candidly, deliberately, and impartially investigate these things—take every possible opportunity for information—and be led, through divine good-

ness and truth, from every false doctrine, human traditions, imperfect and unscriptural systems, and receive the LORD, his pure truth, and heavenly doctrines; and thus come with songs of joy and gladness to the New Jerusalem of our God, the gates of which stand open night and day, to admit and receive every humble prepared mind.

If you candidly reflect upon the subjects above-named, I am convinced you will see nothing in them which is contrary to sound reason and divine revelation. But the other part of my design I must leave until the next opportunity; at which time I shall, by divine permission, lay before you a few things, which, if diligently and faithfully regarded, and put in practice, will be best calculated to ensure the divine blessing upon this society. Those articles will, indeed, apply to other religious congregations, as well as to this, and on that consideration will, I trust, be acceptable to every serious mind now present. Permit me to conclude this discourse by assuring you, that although we differ from professing christians around us in our sentiments and views, yet we wish to agree with them in all the social
con-

connexions of life, and to convince them of our firm and sincere attachment to true piety and practical religion. If we stand distinguished from all the rest by the doctrines we espouse, yet we wish not to be distinguished by a formal stiffness, or pharisaic reserve. If we judge the doctrines we embrace are the most scriptural, and the truths we maintain the most heavenly, and therefore that we have attained to some degree of wisdom, superior to what we heretofore enjoyed; yet we sincerely wish to manifest unto all, that our wisdom is that which is *from above*, and is first *pure*, then *peaceable*, *gentle*, *easy to be intreated*, *full of mercy and good fruits*, *without partiality*, and *without hypocrisy*. James iii. 17.

Finally, our most cordial and ardent prayer is, that we may *hold the truth in righteousness*; that we may *know* the truth from the LORD—firmly maintain it, recommend it by our practice, truly enjoy it in our souls, and under the constant influence of goodness and truth, love and wisdom, faith and charity, we may live a life of extensive usefulness, abide in true charity
with

with all mankind, and walk in all the ordinances of the LORD blameless; that so we may have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men. And to this desire and prayer I hope every individual in this place can heartily say Amen.

And now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, and only wise God our Saviour, be glory and honor, dominion and power, for evermore! Amen.

FINIS.

SERMON II.

THEREFORE NOW LET IT PLEASE THEE TO BLESS
THE HOUSE OF THY SERVANT, THAT IT MAY
CONTINUE FOR EVER BEFORE THEE: FOR THOU,
O LORD GOD, HAST SPOKEN IT, AND WITH THY
BLESSING LET THE HOUSE OF THY SERVANT BE
BLESSED FOR EVER.

II SAMUEL, VII. 29.

Beloved Brethren,

IN our former discourse upon this text, we have laid before you a few reasons why this edifice is erected, and now devoted to religious worship. We have also noticed some of the leading doctrines and truths, which, by divine permission, will be delivered in this Temple, and maintained by this Society. And, according to our propofal, I am now to remind you of a few things, which, if diligently and

and faithfully regarded, will be best calculated to ensure the divine blessing upon us, **which** is requested in our text. After which I shall conclude with a short, but serious and affectionate address, to my audience.

And here I can but again remind you, that the *essential doctrines* of this dispensation, the *grand universals* which include *all the particulars* of our faith, are, that GOD IS ONE; that the LORD JESUS CHRIST *is that one God*—and, second, that we are to love him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength—third, that we are to love our neighbour as ourselves, living in true charity with all mankind—and, fourth, that we are *conscientiously, faithfully, and constantly* to keep *the commandments of our God*. This is the sum and substance of all true religion—upon these doctrines this New Church is founded—and no person can be a real member of it, except he believes in them, and lives a life according to them.

But I proceed to remind you of some things, which, if diligently and faithfully regarded,

regarded, will ensure the divine blessing upon this house, the people, and the worship here performed. And, upon this head, permit me to notice, that the divine blessing and prosperity will greatly depend upon your faithfully maintaining the doctrines and truths of the holy word in *general*, and those of this dispensation in *particular*. You may expect, as you are now distinguished from all other professing christians, that the doctrines and truths you believe in, will be violently opposed. Even religious men, of almost every description, will, while in their *present state*, and under their present views, condemn you as *anticristian*, censure you as *enthusiasts*, or pity you as *weak*, easily led astray, and most notoriously *dehuded*. They will believe, and doubtless *assert*, that you have given into the wild reveries of a madman, a visionary dreamer, or enterprising impostor—they will suppose you have relinquished the holy world, for the uncertain legends of a pretended prophet—and the name of the Swede will be liberally applied to you as a term of reproach. The doctrines and truths you avow, they will suppose to have their foundation only in a
disordered

disordered mind; and not in the infallible oracles of truth. And, therefore, until the minds of the people are more opened to, and receptive of the truths, which are made manifest from heaven, you must expect they will entertain an unfavourable opinion of you as a Christian Society. Moreover, you are not unacquainted with the influence of unseen adversaries, and the many artifices they will use to prevent the success of the *greatest truths*, the *purest doctrines*, and the *best cause* in the world. While, therefore, you have to expect such opposition, you must nobly, zealously, and faithfully maintain the truth you have received; nor let the mistaken censures of men, nor the malicious artifices of infernals, drive you from the standard of truth, or influence you to give up that noble and heavenly cause you this day profess. You will, I trust, see it your duty and interest to make yourselves more familiar, and better acquainted with those instructions which you believe are given you from the LORD, and with the true spiritual sense of his most holy word; that so you may have it in your power to give an answer to gain-sayers, and a solid reason for what you have espoused;

espoused ; and also that you may be more confirmed by rational conviction, that you have not received a cunningly devised fable, but the pure unadulterated truth of the bible. By thus investigating truth, and firmly maintaining and defending it, you may expect a divine blessing from the God of Truth constantly to rest upon you, as a religious society.

Secondly, A *constant, regular, and faithful* discharge of social religious worship, will be another mean of ensuring the favour and blessing of the LORD. This house is professedly and solemnly devoted to the service and worship of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.—And every one who considers himself a member of this church, must see himself under a continual obligation to regularly and religiously attend this place for divine worship. It is much to be lamented, that many who profess themselves members of religious societies, are so remiss and negligent respecting this duty. Any, the most trifling circumstance, will keep them from the house of God—Business that may be avoided, and pleasures which ought to be omitted,

omitted, too frequently engage the professor at those seasons when he ought to unite with his brethren in the solemn services of the LORD's house—whereas nothing ought to prevent our attendance there but what will justify us in the omission, even at the bar of the Most High.—I will only add as to this, if we would wish to see the divine blessing attend this place, let it be our care to have the service of God performed according to divine order; and let every one faithfully attend upon that service at all times and seasons, whensoever he has opportunity and power so to do.

Again, thirdly, There is no doubt but you will, my brethren, see the great importance, and absolute necessity, of *religious order and discipline*—for no house, society, or community, can long exist without *order, wholesome rules, and good government*. Without these, *anarchy, divisions, and at length dissolution*, would be the *certain consequence*—and more especially so in a *religious society*. It is not enough that a church be founded on truth, proper officers appointed, and sacraments duly administered; but certain sound rules must

must be attended to, as to the admission of members, dealing with disorderly persons, whose conduct is unbecoming truth and godliness—the management of many religious matters relative to the church—as also those of a temporal kind. A right subordination maintained—every member of the body in its right place—doing its proper work—and contributing to the good of the whole.—These things considered, with more which might be mentioned, you will see that success and prosperity, peace and unanimity, will much depend upon a *sound discipline, proper rules, and good order.*

Fourth, Can it be needful for me to say, that if you would enjoy the blessing of God, as a church, or religious society, *unanimity* and *concord* must be strictly maintained and preserved among you. Can any thing operate to unite friend to friend, brother to brother, heart to heart, like true religion? Is not love the essence of true christianity? Is it possible that a house divided against itself can stand?—Suppose for a moment that a small religious society, of not more than twenty or thirty members, were divided

vided in affection, full of enmity, variance, discord, &c. could such a people prosper? Could they be happy, or useful to each other? Could their worship and services be acceptable to, or approved of by the Divine Being, the GOD of LOVE and PEACE? or could they expect his blessing and protection? —No, by no means! And how many religious congregations have we known divided, rent in pieces, and dissolved, through want of union, harmony, and agreement?

O, what mischief hath discord done in religious societies! How many feeling, pious hearts, have been wounded thereby! What once flourishing congregations has it destroyed! And what reproach and dishonor have often been brought upon religion itself, by that cursed infernal dæmon, *discord*! But, while religious societies live in union, concord, and harmony, they may expect every good, every blessing, and abundant success; for (as Paul says) the GOD of PEACE will be with them. Be it our care then to avoid every thing that would have the *least tendency* to divide the affections, and disunite heart from heart—for, “Behold how good
 “ and

“ and how pleasant it is for brethren to
 “ dwell together in unity. It is like the pre-
 “ cious ointment upon the head, that ran
 “ down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard,
 “ that went down to the skirts of his gar-
 “ ments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the
 “ dew that descended upon the mountains of
 “ Zion—for THERE the LORD COMMANDED
 “ THE BLESSING, EVEN LIFE FOR EVERMORE.”
 (Psalm cxxxiii.) But I must not enlarge here.
 Permit me further to remind you, that *true*
Charity is *the only* foundation of religious
 union—and that only can preserve it. By
 true charity I mean, our loving each other as
 we love ourselves.—Or in other words, “ True
 “ charity is an internal affection of the soul,
 “ proceeding from the LORD JESUS CHRIST
 “ as its proper foundation, and prompting a
 “ man to do good and act uprightly, from a
 “ pure love of goodness and uprightness,
 “ without any regard to reward or recom-
 “ pense: for it brings its own reward along
 “ with it, and in its exercises is attended with
 “ the *highest and purest satisfactions* of life.”
 (Heav. Doct. No. 104).

The man of charity therefore will seek the
 good of all—and do good to all, according to
 D. the

the power given him, both as to their temporal and their eternal interests.—Suffer me to read to you that beautiful, that inimitable description of charity, given us by the Apostle Paul, in his 1st Epist. to the Cor. ch. xiii.

“ Though I speak with the tongues of men
 “ and of angels, and have not charity, I am
 “ become as sounding brass, or a tinkling
 “ cymbal; and though I have the gift of
 “ prophesy, and understand all mysteries, and
 “ all knowledge; and though I have all faith,
 “ so that I could remove mountains, and
 “ have no charity, I am nothing.— And
 “ though I bestow all my goods to feed the
 “ poor, and give my body to be burned;
 “ and have not charity, it profiteth me
 “ nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is
 “ kind — Charity envyeth not — Charity
 “ vaunteth not itself—is not puffed up—
 “ doth not behave itself unseemly—*seeketh*
 “ *not her own*, is *not easily provoked*, *thinketh*
 “ *no evil*, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but re-
 “ joiceth in the truth—beareth all things,
 “ believeth all things, hopeth all things,
 “ endureth all things—Charity never fail-
 “ eth. And now abideth faith, hope, cha-
 “ rity—these three;—but the *greatest* of these
 “ is *charity*.” &c.

This

This charity, my brethren, will *prevent divisions*, heal breaches, *increase harmony*, promote virtue, put a check to all envy, tale-bearing, evil speaking, resentment, and anger; and, in short, make that religious society where it is truly cultivated, a form of heaven below. And may the God of love and peace inspire every individual in *this* society with this divine virtue! may pure disinterested charity be ever cultivated by you all, and then the gates of hell can never prevail against you!

I will conclude this head of discourse by recommending to you (as an infalliable mean of ensuring the blessing requested in my text) a *constant, regular, and sincere life of goodness and truth; piety and holiness*. I mean, that every one of you will strictly adhere to, and punctually observe, the divine commandments, in every *relative capacity*—in every department of life—in every part of your conduct, whether public or private—whether in the world, in the church, in your family, or in your closet. Remembering that no person can be a worthy and useful member of a religious community, if he be not sober, righteous, and good; or, in other words, if he do not put away evil and do good; cease to

do evil, and learn to do well. The christian professor, and especially the member of the LORD'S New Church, the subject of the holy Jerusalem, must be *internally* and *externally* righteous. The doctrines he hath embraced, are the most holy—the truths he professes, the *most pure*—the principles from which he acts, the *most noble, disinterested, and heavenly*—his views the *most enlarged and animating*—his religious knowledge the *most extensive*—and his reward *infinitely great and glorious*. Therefore his life ought to correspond with the peculiar blessings he hath received, and his example be such as to recommend the holy doctrines and truths he has professed. I would not be understood here to recommend a *melancholly unsocial conduct*, a *sullen or precise behaviour*, a *hypocritical stiffness*, an *affected sanctity*, or an abstinence from the *innocent, harmless enjoyments of life*;—but a *noble, manly virtue*, a *cheerful sobriety*, a strict regard to goodness and truth, an endeavour to make all who are about us *happy*, and so to walk as to be *happy ourselves*, in a *consciousness of the divine approbation and favour*.

I would humbly hope the few rules I have here laid, recommend themselves to the judicious

dicious judgment of this audience, as being absolutely necessary to be attended to by every member of a true christian church; and such as cannot fail to ensure the divine blessing upon that society, which carefully and constantly attends to them. And therefore, that I may not too much intrude upon your patience, I will leave them for the present, and conclude this discourse with a serious and affectionate address to my audience; more especially to that part of it, who are upright professors in the present christian church (so called) of whatever denomination you may be.

My good sirs, as I have thus freely, in the preceding discourse, laid before you some of the leading and more essential doctrines which we as a people believe in and maintain, it is very probable you may at this moment conceive an unfavourable opinion of us as a religious society, in consequence of our faith in doctrines and truths so very opposite to those you at present espouse; especially as I could *only mention* those doctrines, not having time to prove the truth and reality of them by reason and scripture—but that, by divine permission, shall be done in our

further labours. Permit me, however, to seriously assure you, that we do not maintain these doctrines, separate from other religious societies, and establish a regular worship in this Temple, *because we wish to be singular*, or are fond of separating from others. We most heartily wish that all serious minds in Great Britain were so far principled in pure truth and sound doctrine, that we could unite with them in heart and life, in faith and worship. Nor would we have you suppose, that we look with supercilious contempt upon other denominations of professors—for we do not, by any means. We believe there are many sincere, upright minds, of every name and party; men and women, who stand high in the divine favour, as simplified honest minds. We pretend not to condemn our fellow-creatures, nor censure professors of religion—we well know there are many things which powerfully operate against, and prevent their reception of pure truth; and rather than censure them in their present state, we would freely contribute what we are able towards the removal of those hindrances, and the dissipating of those clouds, which prevent the light of divine truth from shining more fully into their minds.

minds. We only wish to oppose *what is evil*, and *what is false*—It is, therefore, the *unsound creeds, articles of faith, human inventions, traditions of men, and unscriptural doctrines*, maintained by the present church of every denomination, which we *are bound to reject*; being, we conceive, fully convinced by divine light and truth, that there are no genuine, pure, unadulterated doctrines, now remaining in the church: but that the abomination which makes desolate, has long been set up in the holy place, by which means genuine primitive christianity has been corrupted, adulterated, and destroyed—errors have abounded, and human inventions have prevailed, to the extinction of pure truth, and sound faith. All confirmed errors and false doctrines operate against goodness; therefore, iniquity has abounded—the love of many waxed cold—and true charity is no more. Or, according to our LORD's predictions, “The sun” [or divine love] “is darkened; the moon” [or true faith] “no longer gives her light; the stars” [or heavenly doctrines and truths] “are fallen from heaven” [that is, the church] “and the powers of the heavens are shaken.” Matt. xxiv. 29.

It is impossible, therefore, for us to be rationally and scripturally convicted that this is the case, and at the same time to abide in and profess the doctrines of such a *desolated church*. Nor are we alone in these our views; many of the clergy, and great numbers of the laity, are, with us, equally convinced that the christian church is come to its consummation—the prophecies of the word, relative to the LORD's second advent, fulfilled; and that the new heavens and new earth are forming—and the New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

You may, sirs, easily conceive we cannot separate ourselves from the old church, for temporal honor, ease, or advantage—no; we rather expect, yea, we find, reproach, trouble, and loss.—Heretics, schismatics, deluded dreamers, visionary enthusiasts, are names and terms of reproach, which we expect to meet with from all quarters—backsliders and apostates from the truth, and from christianity, we doubtless are deemed by those societies we have heretofore been connected with. But all these things move us not. Truth is more precious than rubies or gold; and the sincere
lover

lover of truth will think no sacrifice he can make too great, to obtain and enjoy that *invaluable treasure*. But you will ask, How know we that truth is on our side? I answer, By light from heaven. You rejoin, What light? I reply, The *holy word*, now opened in its internal sense by and from the LORD. You ask, By what mean, or instrument? I answer, By a servant, *sent, gifted, qualified, and appointed* to that work. You will say, How know we this? I add, By rational conviction, the evidence of truth itself, and comparing scripture with scripture, and events with the predictions of them.—Truth always carries its own evidence along with it, to the impartial enquirer, the upright mind:—and here give me leave to observe, that previous to our LORD's first appearance, as the Messiah and Saviour, John the Baptist was sent to prepare his way; that is, to prepare the minds of men for the reception of the LORD and his heavenly doctrine. Objections were then made against John, as a *deceiver, an impostor, a disordered* man. The priests, scribes, pharisees, and religious people of that day, rejected his message; and continued in their mistaken notions, their pride, and unbelief. The consequence was, that when the LORD personally appeared,

taught

taught among them, spake as never man spake, and even died for their souls, they rejected him also; denied his doctrine, said he had a devil, and was mad; and remained in their obstinate infidelity, till the judgments of the LORD fell upon them, and they sunk into that state of wretchedness, which their oppositions and unbelief brought upon them. But those simple, defecate minds, who received the message of John, believed him sent of GOD, and were baptized of him; these were prepared for the reception of his master and Lord, believed on him, received his instructions, left the old church they had long been in, followed Jesus through evil report and persecution, and now sit in his kingdom, behold his glory, and enjoy everlasting felicity and peace.

Suffer me, therefore (as probably I may never have the whole of this judicious audience before me again) to take the freedom of recommending to you the reading of those writings which we (at least) are confident were written by a servant and messenger of the LORD, equally as great, and as certainly sent by the LORD, as John the Baptist—I mean the writings of the Hon. E. SWE-

DENBORG.

DENBORG. Let not the odiums thrown out against him, by prejudiced minds, prevent you from examining for yourselves, and using your rational powers in this case. Let not the *ungenerous, illiberal, and false tales*, circulated concerning him, by envy's forked tongue, hinder your reading the *most profound metaphysician, the most penetrating philosopher, and the soundest divine the world can boast*. —You know that the prophets of God, John the Baptist, the Apostles, and JESUS CHRIST himself, were all equally as much *reviled, reproached, and branded*, with every stigma infernals could suggest, and the tongue of falsehood utter—And with what design? Why that men might be kept *from knowing and receiving the truth*. These *illiberal aspersions*, therefore, *these unkind and false odiums*, are so far from convincing the *rational, impartial mind*, that he was a *deluded man*, or an *impostor*, that they are absolutely a *presumptive proof* that he was a *good man, and sent of God*. Not that we wish you to conceive we idolize THE MAN, or *venerate him* any more than we do any other *sound, pious, and useful christian*—No, the MAN is out of the question. It is the *truth*, manifested from

from the LORD which we *esteem, receive, rejoice in*, and *recommend* to your serious and impartial regard.

The Divine Being *best knows* by *what means*, and at *what times*, to accomplish his own word, and make new discoveries to man; and whether it be by a *prince* or a *peasant*, a *bishop* or a *layman*, we are equally bound to receive the message from the LORD with *gratitude, thankfulness, and love*. And we can say, with a peculiar degree of pleasure, that we have not the least doubt but those *serious, humble minds*, who are in earnest search after truth, from the *love* of truth, will, by an impartial, unprejudiced perusal of the above-named writings, have their understandings *greatly enlightened*, their views of the holy word wonderfully enlarged, and their *most sanguine* expectations gratified. They will, hereby, be convinced that the doctrines and sentiments now maintained by professors in general, are *nugatory* and *unscriptural*; they will be led to see, by the light of divine truth itself, that there is but ONE GOD in *one divine person*; and that the LORD JESUS CHRIST IS THAT ONE GOD—That he is now making

making his second advent amongst men, forming new heavens and a new earth, setting up a kingdom which shall stand for ever, revealing the internal sense of his own holy word, and exhibiting to the view of spiritual minds, the inconceivable wonders of his heavenly kingdom. They will see, to their unutterable joy, that the gates of the New Jerusalem stand open to admit the pious prepared minds, who are principled in goodness and truth. And with songs of joy, with unwordable rapture, gratitude, and love, they will enter into the happy city; and unite with all the holy sons and daughters of Zion, to celebrate the praise of our *most merciful* LORD JEHOVAH, who hath again condescended to visit fallen man with *new discoveries* of mercy, truth, and love.

Permit me, my christian brethren, to earnestly exhort you, to make the trial for yourselves. I can have no views herein, but your everlasting good and advantage. You will therefore excuse my freedom. I only give my advice in these things—I have no authority to do more—and *that* I do in love. Most of you are strangers to
me

me at present—but we are all the offspring of one Creator and God. Therefore as men, as *brethren*, we ought to be dear to each other; and true charity will compel us to be kind, affectionate, and zealous to promote each others true happiness.—Under this influence, I trust it is, that I now so earnestly call upon you, to investigate truth—examine what I have recommended—and give up your will and understanding to the LORD alone:—And be assured, that whether you examine for yourselves or not—whether you *favor* or *reject* the doctrines we have recommended, still we shall continue to esteem you, so far as goodness and truth are manifest in the life and conversation. And we neither expect nor request the good opinion of pious minds, any further than we act from those principles, and regulate our lives by the infallible rule of God's holy word.—The doctrines we maintain, are open to the inspection and judgment of men; and we only wish them to be received by mankind, as from reason and scripture they are convinced of their truth and importance.

We trust we shall ever be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness

ness and humility, at the same time with a firm resolution, and manly fortitude, defend and support, by solid argument and holy writ, the system we have espoused.—And while we firmly maintain, preach, and profess the doctrines and truths of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, our God and Saviour, I hope it will be our constant endeavour to recommend those holy and heavenly doctrines, by a regular uniform life of goodness and truth—faith and love—charity and usefulness—Or, in scripture language, to love the LORD our God with all the heart—our neighbour as ourselves—and keep the commandments. With this firm resolution and desire we will conclude this discourse, by praying in the words of our text, “ There-
 “ fore now let it please thee, O LORD our
 “ God, to bless this house of thy servant,
 “ that it may continue for ever before thee;
 “ for thou, O LORD God, hast spoken it,
 “ and with thy blessing let the house of thy
 “ servant be blessed for ever !” Amen.

F I N I S.

